

## Marine Notice No. 18 of 2012

*Notice to all owners/operators of passenger ships and boats*

### Accessible Passenger Vessels – the Voluntary Approach

This Marine Notice is primarily addressed to passenger ship/boat owners/operators. The purpose of this Marine Notice is:

1. To promote and encourage voluntary efforts by the owners and operators of passenger ships/boats to improve the accessibility of maritime passenger transport services.
2. To draw attention to the Merchant Shipping Act 2010.
3. To highlight the usefulness of the “*Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport*” in providing advice and best practice information for improving the accessibility of maritime passenger services.
4. To draw attention to the Department’s monitoring programme during 2012 and 2013 to assess how the voluntary approach to accessibility is working.

#### **New Domestic Legislation**

Part 4 of the Merchant Shipping Act 2010 gives powers to the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport to introduce measures to make maritime passenger transport services more accessible. Under the Act, the Minister can introduce Reduced Mobility Regulations which would set out requirements that operators must comply with for the purpose of making passenger vessels accessible to persons with reduced mobility.

#### **The Voluntary Approach**

The Department is committed to improving public transport accessibility. However, it is not proposed to introduce Regulations under the 2010 Act in the immediate future. The emphasis at this point in time is to encourage voluntary efforts by operators to improve access to their passenger services.

In 2008 and 2009 the Department engaged consultants to carry out voluntary access audits on a number of Irish ships and the harbours/landing places to and from which they operate. The reports on the audits were sent to the passenger ship owners concerned.

While it is acknowledged that the size and age of ships can prevent full accessibility in some cases, it is considered that there are always improvements, no matter how small, that can be made to improve accessibility in existing ships. The audit reports highlighted some cost-effective adjustments that can be made to improve passenger services generally.

These include improved pre-journey information, suitable signage, use of contrasting paint colours, removal of access barriers and disability awareness training.

Information and suggestions for improving the accessibility of passenger services are contained in the “[Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport](#)” booklet produced by this Department and the National Disability Authority (NDA) in 2010. It is available to download or view free of charge on the Maritime Section of the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport website [www.dttas.ie](http://www.dttas.ie) (under “Publications”) and on the NDA website [www.nda.ie](http://www.nda.ie).

### **The Department’s Monitoring Programme to Assess the Voluntary Approach to Accessibility**

Throughout 2012 and 2013, during the annual survey of passenger ships or in the context of the grant or renewal of passenger boat licences, the Marine Surveyors of the Department will be asking owners/operators to complete or answer the questions listed on the questionnaire attached at the appendix to this Marine Notice. The questionnaire will also be used during the Marine Survey Office in-service inspections during the summer months.

The answers to the questionnaire will help to inform the Department about the extent of the accessibility improvements that have been introduced. They will also assist the Department in determining whether a mandatory regulatory approach to accessibility will be needed in the future. Therefore, the Department requests your co-operation in providing a response to the Surveyors in relation to the issues raised in the questionnaire.

The Department would also request that you familiarise yourself with the questionnaire and be able to identify the accessible features of your vessel/service, and any recent improvements to accessibility made since the publication of the 2010 “*Guidelines for Accessible Maritime Passenger Transport*”. It is important to remember that access improvements can be low cost while being very effective, and they benefit all passengers using your service.

Director General,  
Maritime Safety Directorate,  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport,  
Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland.

18/04/2012  
Encl. Questionnaire

<p>For any technical assistance in relation to this Marine Notice, please contact: The Marine Survey Office, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, tel: +353-(0)1-678 3400. For general enquiries, please contact the Maritime Safety Policy Division, tel: +353-(0)1-678 3418. Written enquiries concerning Marine Notices should be addressed to: Maritime Safety Directorate, Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, Leeson Lane, Dublin 2, Ireland. email: <a href="mailto:marinenotices@dtas.ie">marinenotices@dtas.ie</a> or visit us at: <a href="http://www.dttas.ie">www.dttas.ie</a></p>
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**Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport  
Disability Access Questionnaire 2012/2013—Monitoring of Voluntary Efforts**

Vessel type: Passenger Ship/Passenger Boat/RoRo Ferries/Other (specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Name of vessel: \_\_\_\_\_

Ship owner/company: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Survey: \_\_\_\_\_

Completed by: \_\_\_\_\_

No.	Question	Yes	No	Details/Suggestions for improvement
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**A — Pre-journey Information**

Q.1	Does this passenger service have (a) a website (b) an information leaflet?			
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Q.2	Is there disability access information provided on (a) the website and/or (b) information leaflets?			
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Q.3	Is the (a) website (b) information leaflet information available in accessible formats?			
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Q.4	Is it clearly explained for customers where barriers to accessibility exist for the service?			
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**B — Signage at the Port/Boarding Area**

Q.5	Is there information and direction signage at the port/boarding area?			
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Q.6	Is this information provided in accessible form? (e.g. easy to read font size, use of colour contrast, matt surface)			
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**C — Ship and Shore Interface**

Q.7	Is the gangway suitable for “standard size” wheelchair usage? (strength, width, flaps at ends, etc)			
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No.	Question	Yes	No	Details/Suggestions for improvement
Q.8	<p>Are appropriate handrails and non-slip surface material provided</p> <p>(a) on the gangway,</p> <p>(b) at the entrance to the ship?</p>			
<b>D — Signage on the Ship</b>				
Q.9	<p>Are the safety and information signs correctly positioned and in an easy to read accessible format?</p> <p>(e.g. easy to read font size, use of colour contrast, matt surface)</p>			
<b>E — Safety Information and Announcements</b>				
Q.10	<p>Are safety information cards available in an accessible format?</p>			
Q.11	<p>Are announcements made only over a public address system or are alternative means available? (TV screens, digital scrolling info bars, etc.)</p>			
<b>G — Handrails and Grab Rails</b>				
Q.12	<p>Are appropriate handrails fitted on stairs and external walkways and ladders?</p>			
Q.13	<p>Are grab rails provided</p> <p>(a) along walkways</p> <p>(b) in the toilet facility?</p>			
Q.14	<p>Are the handrails and grab rails colour contrasted against their background?</p>			
<b>H — Accessible Toilet Facilities</b>				
Q.15	<p>Where toilet facilities are provided on board, have they been made as accessible as possible?</p>			
Q.16	<p>If there is no accessible toilet on board, where is the nearest accessible facility which may be used prior to or after journey?</p>			

No.	Question	Yes	No	Details/Suggestions for improvement
<b>I — Walkways</b>				
Q.17	(a) Is there an instruction or policy that all public access spaces are kept clear of items that could pose a hazard to a person with a disability? (b) Are all public access spaces clear and tidy?			
Q.18	Are tactile surfaces and colour markings provided for warning at stairs and other hazards?			
<b>J — Structural Fixtures and Fittings</b>				
Q.19	Are structural fixtures and fittings that could present a hazard clearly marked or padded to prevent injury?			
<b>K — Seating</b>				
Q.20	Is there seating or seating areas particularly suitable or adapted for passengers with disabilities and reduced mobility on board?			
<b>L — Disability Awareness Training</b>				
Q.21	What training and instruction is given to crew members for aiding people with disabilities?			
Q.22	(a) How many staff have attended formal disability awareness training? (b) What percentage of staff does this figure represent?			
Q.23	How often is disability awareness refresher training given?			

**M — Other Improvements Made**

**Q.24 Please provide information regarding other accessibility improvements made (if any):**

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